

Talking with young people

For Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) providers in the
context of COVID-19

Module Three: Responding to behaviours of concern

- The Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognises their continuing connection to land, water and community.
- The Centre pays our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders: past, present and emerging.



Housekeeping

- Oliver Tsorbaris from the Centre who is moderating this session
- Please contribute to the session by asking questions through chat or Q & A
- There are four polls during the session where you will be asked to share your responses
- The information you receive today should be used as a guide only

The modules

Module One: How young people may be impacted by COVID-19.

Module Two: Intersectionality and additional considerations in working with young people.

Module Three: Responding to behaviours of concern.

Module Four: Talking with young people about family and community, trauma, suicidality and hope.

Overview

The following presentation contains the third of four modules. Each module provides guidance and suggestions for carers of children and young people (between the ages of 10 – 18 years) in OOHC during a crisis.

References are provided at the end of this presentation.

Poll 1 - What behaviours of concern have you noticed, individually or collectively?



Module Three

Responding to behaviours of concern



Learning outcomes

At the end of Module Three, participants will understand:

- the issues specific to young people in care, including absconding,
- ways to speak to young people to enhance compliance with government regulations,
- how to speak with young people about harm minimisation, and
- responding to questions young people may have.

Absconding

Practitioners working with young people OOHC face many additional challenges. One of these is *absconding*.

Consequences of absconding can include:

- the young person is at risk of infection,
- the young person's behaviour supports the spread of the virus and potentially infects others,
- the young person may breach government guidelines including self isolation and social distancing,
- community members and/or the police may be abused, intimidated or assaulted for taking action to address the breach, and
- young people may face official warnings, fines and the youth justice system as a consequence of their behaviours.

Issues

- It is important young people fully understand the risks.
- Young people need to understand government requirements and legislation and be aware of changes as they occur.
- The relationship between a carer and a young person is the most important mechanism to support behaviour change.

Key messages

At present key messages young people need to understand are:

- practising good hygiene,
- practising social distancing,
- following the limits for social gatherings, and
- understanding what self isolation means and when it might be necessary.

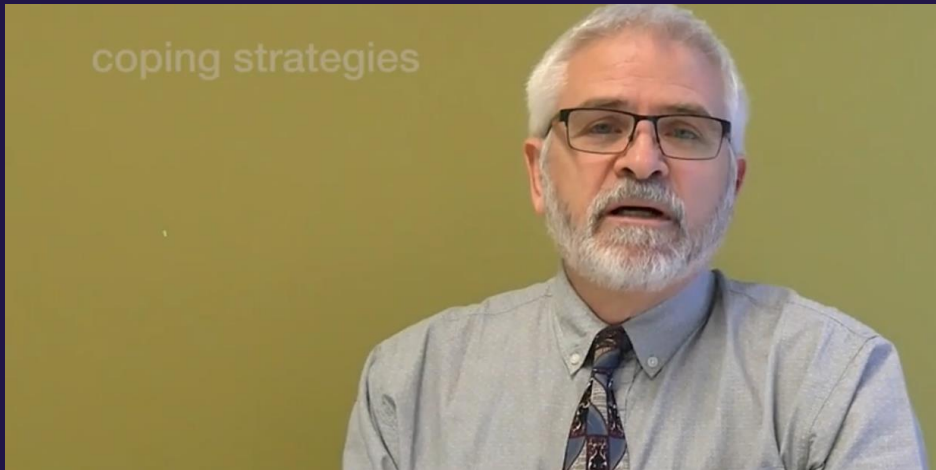


YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE & TRAUMA

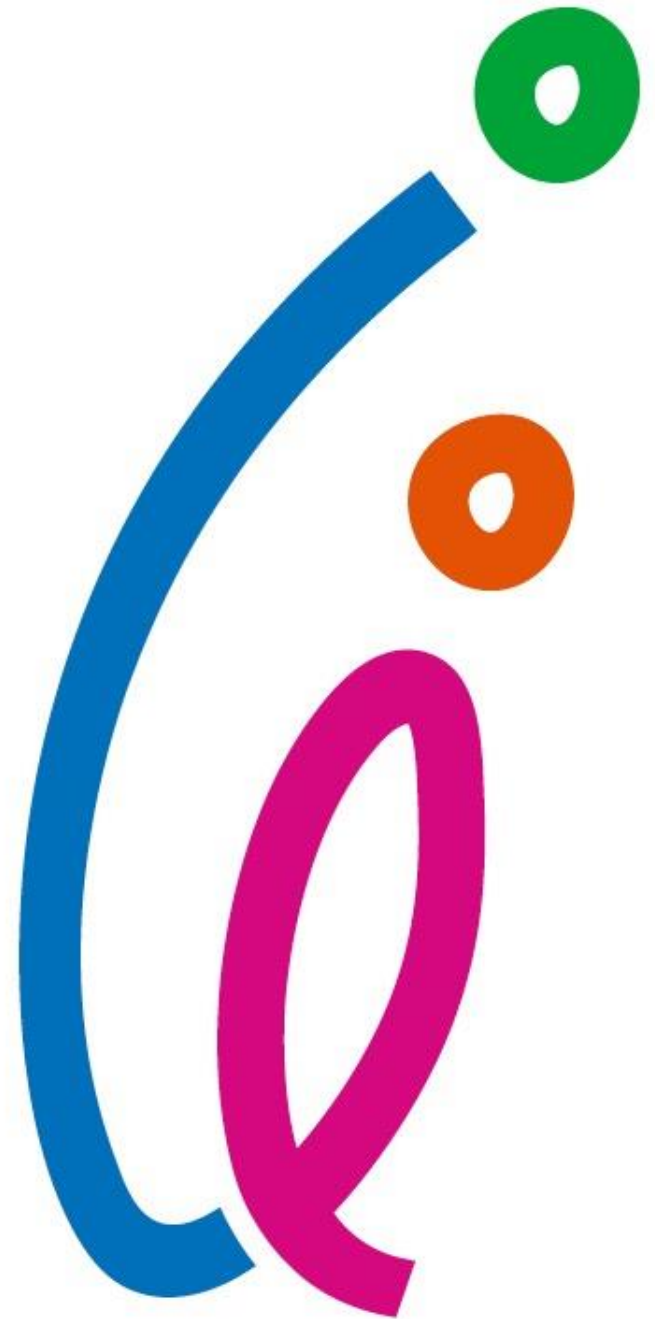
strategies to help
active listening
naming the emotion



Poll 2 - Coping Strategies



strategies to help
active listening
naming the emotion



Adolescence

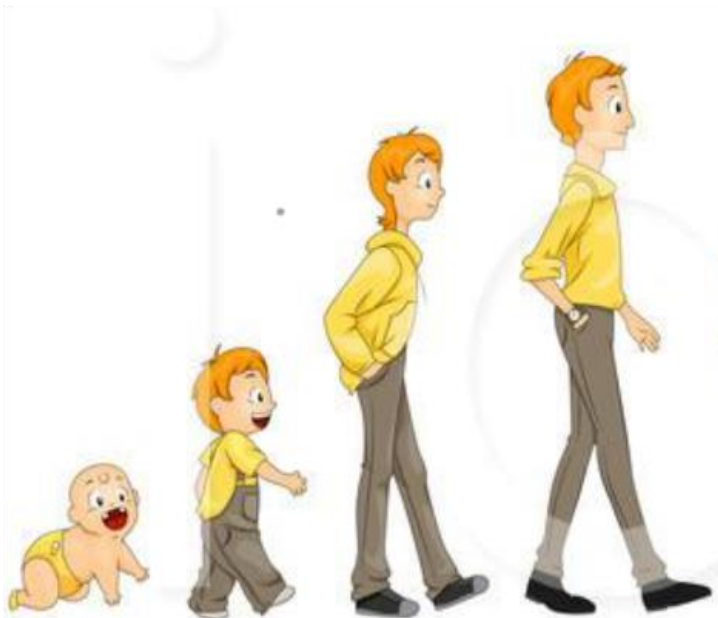
- Adolescence is a stage involving increased risk taking.
- Young people impacted by trauma may have compromised emotional and psychological development.
- They may lack empathy which means they are not mindful of the risks their behaviour poses to others.
- The importance of speaking with young people in order to minimise these risks cannot be overstated.
- Conversations with young people need to consider chronological and developmental age.

Age and stage

- Young people's physical, emotional, cognitive and psychological development may not necessarily be in line with their chronological age.
- We need to account for both the chronological age of the young person we are talking to as well as their developmental age.

Considering chronological age

In having conversations with young people you should consider their capacity to understand information and their responsibilities.



10-14 years

- Younger adolescents may be more worried about other people.
- They require basic and easy to understand information.
- Be guided by them and the questions they ask.

14 – 18 years

- This age group may have different concerns from younger adolescents.
- They may be more focused on how the virus impacts them, than on others.
- Adolescence is also a developmental stage where young people are risk taking.
- They may be less likely to understand their vulnerability to the virus and impacts of their behaviour on others.

14 - 18 years

They may have increased concerns about:

- how having the virus might impact their relationships with peers, including intimate partner relationships,
- what happens if they don't follow government regulations,
- being rejected by their peers if they catch the virus,
- being isolated from peers if they catch the virus,
- whether having the virus influences sexual and other health longer term, and
- whether their freedom and independence will be compromised by government restrictions.

Harm minimisation

Harm minimisation strategies may include:

- issuing each young person with face masks and sanitiser (if they do abscond they will have some measure of protection),
- emphasising that if they do abscond they need to be aware of social distancing,
- ensuring they have access to social media and possibly extending the time they can be online, and
- making sure they have adequate information about virus transmission.



General principles in talking with young people

- **Time and place.** Consider the place and timing for having conversations with young people.
- **Respect.** Respect how they feel or what is of concern for them.
- **Language matters.** No 'musts' or 'shoulds'. Active listening is important

General principles when talking with young people

- **Be honest, genuine and open** - Don't try and sugar coat the reality.
- **Body language** - Use open body language. Lean forward, indicate you are interested.
- **Be patient** - It may take time for them to process information. Let them know you are available to speak to and answer any questions.

Talking with young people about their concerns

- **Normalise the concerns and then check in.**
- Let them know that any feeling is OK.
- Everyone has different concerns and feelings and that's normal and OK.
- Different people deal with feelings in different ways.
- There are no stupid questions.

Talking with young people about their concerns

Validate their concerns by paraphrasing what they have said and checking in:

- It sounds like you're really worried about your brothers. Is that what's preoccupying you?
- It sounds like you're feeling anxious you might catch the virus? Is that right?

Talking with young people about their concerns

Provide up to date and factual information

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/carers/caring-for-a-child/chapters/child-whos-experienced-trauma>

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/covid-19>

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/tips-helping-children-trauma/>

<https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/coronavirus/>

**Share your positive experiences - How
have you helped a young person
overcome trauma?**



Thank you

Questions?